

# Russia's problems under Tsar Nicholas II

In 1900, Russia was a huge empire of many different peoples. It was held together by one man, Nicholas II, known as the Tsar (emperor). His family, the Romanovs, had ruled the country for around three hundred years. Most of his subjects were peasants, although the number of industrial workers was increasing. He had a largely loyal population, growing industrial wealth and complete power. It might seem that he had no real problems to face. Yet, despite his wealth and power, he was faced with difficult choices.

## Could the Tsar solve Russia's problems?

### The problems of the countryside

Russian peasants were desperately poor. The population was increasing and there did not seem to be enough land to provide for them all. Their problems were made much worse by inefficient farming methods. Farming was organised on a village basis by the mir (village council). Individual peasants could not act on their own to improve farming techniques without the support of the mir.

Most peasants were loyal to the Tsar and the Romanov family. They did not blame their beloved Tsar for their poverty. Instead they criticised the nobles who, they felt, had cheated them of land that rightly belonged to them. From 1900 onwards, a series of violent disturbances broke out in many country areas. Land

belonging to the nobles was seized and occupied by the peasants. This was not a direct threat to the Tsar, but both nobles and peasants looked to him for a solution.

### SOURCE B



*A peasant family in the doorway of their small wooden shack.*

### SOURCE A



*A nobleman's family, with a number of peasants who work on their estate, at their house near Moscow.*

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As the Tsar needed the support of the nobles, he could not be seen to side with the peasants. At the same time, he had to find some way to calm their anger and make farming more productive. His Chief Minister, Peter Stolypin (1906–11), introduced reforms that allowed peasants to set up their own farms, outside the control of the mir. He hoped that improved farming methods would increase the numbers of prosperous, independent peasants known as kulaks. The kulaks would then be able to pay more tax to the government and would help make the countryside peaceful. By 1914 his policy had achieved only limited success and 90 per cent of all peasants still remained under the control of the mirs. Many hungry peasants moved to the cities to find work.

### The problems of the cities

Under Sergei Witte (Minister of Finance 1890–1903), Russian industry grew very quickly. Witte encouraged foreign investment and built thousands of kilometres of railways. Industrial workers had hard lives. They suffered long hours and dangerous conditions for very low pay. The speed of industrialisation led to overcrowding in the cities. Many slept in their factories, others lived in uncomfortable barracks, and even those fortunate enough to find a flat or a room often had to share with several other families.

### SOURCE C



Factory workers eating in a canteen.

### SOURCE D

#### Strikes in Russia 1910–14

Year	Number of Strikes	Icon
1910	222	
1911	466	
1912	2032	
1913	2404	
1914 (up to July)	4098	

Most factory workers were unhappy. As they had no political voice they showed their discontent in frequent strikes. There were limits to how far the Tsar could help the workers. Many Russian factories were owned by foreign companies who had deliberately invested in Russia because it cost so little to employ Russian workers. If the Tsar were to pass laws forcing these companies to pay higher wages and provide better conditions, it might make the investors withdraw their money altogether. This would have wrecked the entire process of industrialisation. Some of the larger factories were owned by the Russian government but, even here, the Tsar could do little. These factories were built by borrowing money from abroad, so the government was deeply in debt. Once the government had met the huge repayments on these foreign loans, it had little money left to put towards helping the workers.

**Why did Russia need industry?**

The Russian government wanted factories so that Russia could become rich and powerful like Britain, the USA and Germany. All these other countries had been through an industrial revolution.

Industry was also needed to strengthen Russia's ability to defend herself. Increasingly, success in war meant having the industries to supply large armies. Russia's industrial backwardness had contributed to her defeat by Britain and France in the Crimean War (1854-6). In the period after 1900, European countries began an arms race, relying on their industries to make more and more weapons. The only way for Russia to survive this threat seemed to be to make as many weapons as her enemies. This meant industrialising as quickly as possible. Whatever its cost, industrialisation had to go ahead. The scale of industrial expansion in Russia was remarkable.

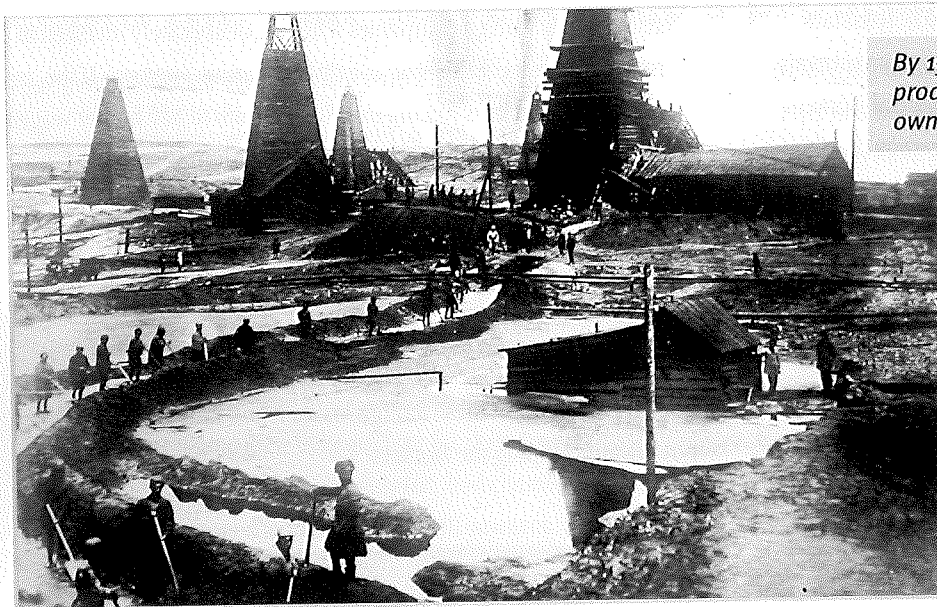
**SOURCE G**

*A historian has commented on the speed with which Russia increased industrial production at this time:*

A recent Soviet textbook, which is not likely to overestimate the achievements of Tsarism, has put forward the following estimates: during the period 1860-1910 the world's industrial production increased by [a factor of] 6, Great Britain's by 2.5, Germany's by 6 and Russia's by 10.5.

Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR*, 1969

**SOURCE E**



*By 1913, Russia was the world's second biggest oil producer but these rigs in the Baku oil fields were owned by a Swedish industrialist.*

**SOURCE F**

**Russian and German industrialisation in 1913**

	Germany		Russia	
Coal (millions of tonnes)	190.0		36.0	
Pig iron (millions of tonnes)	6.8		4.6	
Steel (millions of tonnes)	8.3		4.8	
Railways (thousands of kilometres)	64.0		65.0	

**>> Activity**

- 1 Explain the following terms:
  - > Tsar
  - > mir
  - > kulak.
- 2 Why was there unrest and unhappiness in:
  - > the Russian countryside;
  - > the Russian cities?
- 3 Who were Peter Stolypin and Sergei Witte? What did each man do to develop the economy?
- 4 Using the whole of this unit for information, explain why Tsar Nicholas II faced huge problems in governing Russia.

# The Tsar's opponents and supporters

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## Who opposed the Tsar?

There were three main political groups who opposed the Tsar.

*The Kadets* (the Constitutional Democrats) were a middle-class liberal party that wanted peaceful political change leading to the handover of power to an elected *duma* (parliament). Their support was restricted to the small, well-educated and wealthy population of the towns. Their programme of political reform offered nothing to attract the support of the peasants and workers. They were divided between those who were willing to work with the Tsar and those who thought that Russia must become a republic.

*The Social Revolutionaries* (the SRs) had support among a small section of the peasantry and favoured seizing power by revolution. Once in power, they would change the system of land ownership to make life better for the peasants. Although their potential support seemed huge, the very size of the country and the ignorance of the peasantry made it impossible to organise a mass movement. The Social Revolutionaries were divided in both their aims and their methods. Some simply wanted to share out the land among the peasants. Others wanted to abolish private ownership altogether

and introduce a system where all land was owned by the entire community. Some wanted to achieve this by peaceful change, while others believed in using violence.

*The Social Democrats* were supported by many factory workers. They followed the communist teachings of Karl Marx (1818–83), a German writer who believed that modern industrial societies were divided between the workers (the proletariat) and the wealthy factory owners (the capitalists). Marx said that capitalists exploited the workers unfairly with the support of the government. The only way to change the situation was for the workers in every country to unite and overthrow their governments by revolution. Once the existing governments were overthrown, the proletariat would take over and introduce a true communist system, where all wealth is shared evenly and where the factories are run for the benefit of the proletariat.

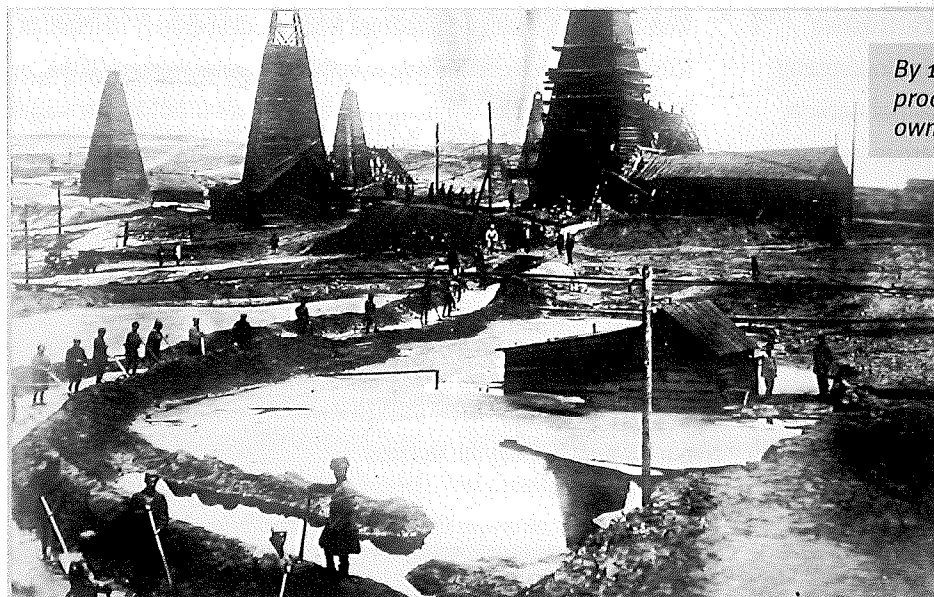
In 1903, the Social Democrats split into two separate groups or factions: the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. The split was largely the result of an argument over how the party should gain power.

The Mensheviks wanted to try to win the support of sympathetic middle-class people in order to create a political party with widespread support. They would then work gradually towards a communist society. The Bolsheviks believed that the Tsar would make it impossible to organise a mass movement like this. They thought it would be better to remain as a comparatively small group of revolutionaries, who could plot in secret and stage a revolution as soon as possible.



An artist's impression of the assassination of the Tsar's uncle, the Grand Duke Sergei, in 1905.  
 > Which political group do you think was most likely to have been responsible for his murder?

## SOURCE E



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The split of 1903 meant that there were two rival factions in the small Social Democratic party. The members were divided in their attitude to the middle class, and had little appeal for the peasantry who made up the vast majority of the population.

## Who supported the Tsar?

The Tsar's most faithful supporters were the nobles, but he was also popular with many of the wealthiest middle-class people. They were making a good living out of the industry that he was introducing into the country. Some of them had invested in the new factories and were grateful to him for keeping the workers under control. Many peasants also supported him because the Church taught them that loyalty to the Tsar and loyalty to God were the same thing. Even those peasants and workers who did complain rarely blamed the Tsar directly. Instead, they attacked the noble landlords or the factory owners, and preferred to believe that the Tsar was a good man who was misled by bad advisers.

highly effective, secret police force, known as the Okhrana, which spied on every area of Russian life. They could usually arrest troublemakers before any trouble occurred. Once arrested, the suspect could be tortured, imprisoned, or sent into exile in a remote part of the country. The work of the Okhrana kept illegal opposition groups weak and disorganised. By the early 1900s most of their leaders had fled abroad where they had little influence.

### THE TSAR'S OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS

#### Against the Tsar

The Kadets  
The Social Revolutionaries  
The Social Democrats  
(after 1903, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks)

#### For the Tsar

The nobles  
The Church  
The wealthy middle class  
Many peasants and workers who were traditionally loyal to the Tsar

## The Tsar's response to opposition

The Tsar could be completely ruthless towards the people who did protest. On many occasions he used the army to put down street demonstrations with brutal force. Even those who did not protest openly but plotted in secret had little chance, for the Tsar had a

### Discussion point

➤ Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three opposition groups. Explain which one you think was the greatest danger to the Tsar.



*A political prisoner is put in chains by the guards on Sakhalin Island, a harsh and desolate prison colony off the east coast of Russia.*

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# The events of 1905

### The Russo-Japanese War

Early in 1904, Russia became involved in a war with Japan over control of Manchuria and Korea. The Tsar and his ministers believed that they could achieve a quick victory that would increase their popularity at home. However, the Pacific Fleet was smashed by the Japanese at Port Arthur and, in early 1905, the Russian army was heavily defeated at Mukden. The Baltic Fleet sailed to the rescue but was, in turn, destroyed at the Battle of Tsushima. The Tsar now had to take the blame for these shocking defeats.

### The 1905 Revolution

The war caused enormous disruption to the economy. In particular, the railway system was used to keep the army supplied in the Far East. In the cities, the resulting lack of transport led to food shortages and price rises. The situation became worse when factories, which were unable to obtain raw materials, either had to lay off workers, or close down altogether. At first the workers were prepared to support the war effort, but as they became more and more desperate, and news of the defeats came in, their mood changed. They responded with a series of strikes, demanding not only higher wages, but also the right to form trade unions and have unpopular laws abolished.



Troops firing at demonstrators outside the Winter Palace in January 1905. For many years after the event, Bloody Sunday was a favourite subject for artists.  
> Why do you think this was so?

### TROTSKY 1879–1940

Trotsky had always been active in revolutionary politics. In 1898 he was arrested for being a Marxist and exiled to Siberia. He escaped in 1902 and spent many years abroad, hiding from the Tsarist police. He returned to Russia after the outbreak of the 1905 Revolution and became Chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet. After the Revolution failed, he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment in Siberia. He escaped to the West and spent his time working as a political journalist. Once the Tsar had been overthrown in March 1917, he would return to St Petersburg (now renamed Petrograd).

On 22 January 1905, a priest named Father Gapon led 200,000 peaceful workers in a march on the Tsar's Winter Palace in St Petersburg to present a petition. The soldiers guarding the palace fired on the marchers, killing hundreds, and the incident quickly became known as 'Bloody Sunday'. Millions of workers all over Russia joined a general strike that soon paralysed the entire country. Moderates lost support for their peaceful approach, and some Social Democrats like Leon Trotsky angrily demanded a workers' government. In St Petersburg, and many other major cities, the workers organised themselves into soviets (councils) to lead the new wave of protests. Trotsky became Chairman of the St Petersburg Soviet a few weeks before it was suppressed. He managed to persuade the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks to co-operate with each other, and even put forward ambitious plans for them to re-unite.

There was also widespread unrest in the countryside. The Tsar even seemed to be losing control of the military when, in June 1905, the members of the crew of the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied and murdered their officers.

### Discussion point

> Why do you think the 1905 Revolution broke out?

# 1905 – the aftermath

In 1905 Nicholas seemed doomed. He had lost control of the cities to the workers' soviets and the countryside was in chaos. Even the army now appeared unreliable. Remarkably he managed to cling on to power.

## How did the Tsar survive the 1905 Revolution?

### Concessions

The Tsar's Chief Minister, Sergei Witte (1905–6), realised that the alliance between middle-class protesters and working-class revolutionaries could be broken. The middle class, in particular, feared the growing influence of Trotsky and the Social Democrats and opposed their demand for an eight-hour working day in the factories. At the end of 1905, Witte persuaded the Tsar to issue the 'October Manifesto', a series of laws that allowed greater freedom to the individual, and to call a duma (parliament) which would share power with the Tsar. These concessions brought middle-class opposition to an end.

### Force

The Social Revolutionaries and the Social Democrats saw that the October Manifesto offered little for the workers or peasants. They decided to continue the revolution. The Tsar employed the army to suppress all disturbances, while his Chief Minister, Stolypin (who replaced Witte in 1906), used the police and the law courts against suspected agitators. They were either hung, or sent into exile for long periods in remote areas of Russia like Siberia. Trotsky was arrested and, within a few months, the striking workers had been starved back to work and their leaders were either in prison or on the run. Order was not restored so easily in Moscow, where an armed rising by 2,000 workers was only suppressed after ten days of street fighting. In the countryside, Stolypin encouraged Tsarist gangs known as Black Hundreds to kill any peasant suspected of causing trouble.

### The duma is kept in check

The Tsar had only allowed a duma to meet in order to silence middle-class opposition, while he dealt with the workers and peasants. By 1906, he felt that it was safe to destroy the influence of the duma. He made two important additions to the reforms in his October Manifesto. He claimed the right to dismiss any duma that he did not like, and to decide how the new duma members were elected. Within a year, he had dismissed two dumas and changed the election rules so that only the very rich had a real say in elections. This meant that the next two dumas were filled with his own aristocratic supporters, who caused him no trouble.

### SOURCE A



*A later painting of the street fighting in Moscow during December 1905.*

> What can you tell about the social class of the fighters?

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### SOURCE B

The Tsar stated his reasons for closing down the first *duma* in July 1906:

A cruel disappointment has befallen Our expectations. The representatives of the nation, instead of applying themselves to the work of productive legislation, have strayed into spheres beyond their competence, and have been making enquiries into the acts of local authorities established by Ourselves which can only be modified by Our imperial will.

### Peace with Japan

Once Nicholas II realised that his armies were defeated, he ended the war in order to concentrate on his domestic problems. As soon as he pulled Russia out of the war, the problems that it had caused to industry began to ease, and working-class discontent was reduced. His army remained loyal throughout, and he was able to use the returning troops against those workers and peasants who still opposed him. Lastly, he skilfully exploited the divisions between his opponents, who were never able to work together. His October Manifesto split the middle class from the workers and peasants, and bought him vital time.

### The cost of the 1905 Revolution

Historians still argue about whether the failure of the 1905 Revolution meant that the Tsar was secure, or whether it merely bought him time before he was finally overthrown because of his failure to cope with Russia's problems. Stolypin believed that the regime could be saved if it could avoid war for another twenty years, but others thought that the events of 1905 left the Tsar's government doomed. His image as a caring father to his people was shattered by 'Bloody Sunday' and the brutal actions of Stolypin and the Black Hundreds. Many middle-class politicians felt that they had been tricked by the way he had treated the *duma* and they were determined not to trust him again. Although he had retained power, it seemed that he had lost much of the trust and affection of his people.

### SOURCE C



Tsarist officials preparing to decorate the Imperial Palace with skulls. This Russian cartoon shows the extent to which the Tsar had lost the confidence of his subjects.

### SOURCE D

In 1906, the American Consul in Odessa commented on how the reaction of the Tsar and his government to the 1905 Revolution had affected their popularity.

All classes condemn the authorities and more particularly the emperor [Tsar]. The present ruler has lost absolutely the love of the Russian people; whatever the future may have in store for the dynasty, the present Tsar will never again be safe in the midst of his people.

## >> Activity

- 1 What was the October Manifesto? How did it help the Tsar to stay in power?
- 2 How did the Tsar use brutality and repression to stay in power?
- 3 Why did Nicholas reduce the power of the *duma* in 1906?
- 4 Why did many Russians feel bitterness towards Tsar Nicholas II after the 1905 Revolution?



# The First World War

The First World War was a disaster for Russia. Many Russians laid all the blame on the Tsar and came to see his overthrow as the only way to save the country from a crushing defeat.

## How did the First World War help to destroy the Tsar?

### WHY WAS RUSSIA LOSING THE WAR?

With a huge army of 6 million men, it seemed that Russia could not lose. However, it proved impossible to supply this army from Russia's small industrial base. This problem was made worse by the gross inefficiency and corruption of the Tsar's administrators leading to chronic waste and confusion. The transport system was unable to carry sufficient supplies both to the towns and to the army. The army used outdated tactics and its generals were poor leaders.

### RUSSIA IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

- August 1914:** Russia declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary.
- August – September 1914:** The Russian army was victorious against Austria at Lemberg, but was overwhelmingly defeated by Germany at the battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes. There were over a million Russian casualties.
- 1915:** The German army advanced deep into Russia, taking thousands of square kilometres of Russian territory.
- 1916:** The Russians launched the 'Brusilov Offensive' against Austria. General Brusilov's army recaptured some land but was eventually pushed back. A further million Russians were killed or wounded.
- 1917:** The Russian army was demoralised and nearing collapse.

### SOURCE A



A Russian postcard issued in May 1916 that shows the Tsar as Commander-in-Chief.

### FACTOR 1 THE TSAR AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

In 1915 the Tsar took overall command of the conduct of the war. This was a terrible mistake, as it meant that he could no longer blame the defeats on his subordinates but had to take all the responsibility himself. The support of the army ebbed away, as his soldiers now blamed him directly for their misery and for the high casualties. The peasants, who provided most of the army's recruits, had their image of a wise and caring Tsar further shattered by the experience of war.

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### FACTOR 2 THE TSARINA

While the Tsar was at the front, he left the running of the country in the hands of his wife, the Tsarina. She refused to take any advice from loyal middle-class members of the duma and preferred to rule herself. Her refusal to share policy decisions, just like the Tsar, meant that she came to be blamed for everything that went wrong. The patriotic middle class became more and more frustrated at the incompetence of the Tsarina and her refusal to allow them a share in government. They were convinced that they could do better.

During the war, Russian people came to hate all things German. They even changed the name of their capital city to Petrograd because St Petersburg sounded too German. The Tsarina was German. This added greatly to her unpopularity. Rumours soon spread that she was trying to sabotage Russia's war effort in order to ensure a German victory.

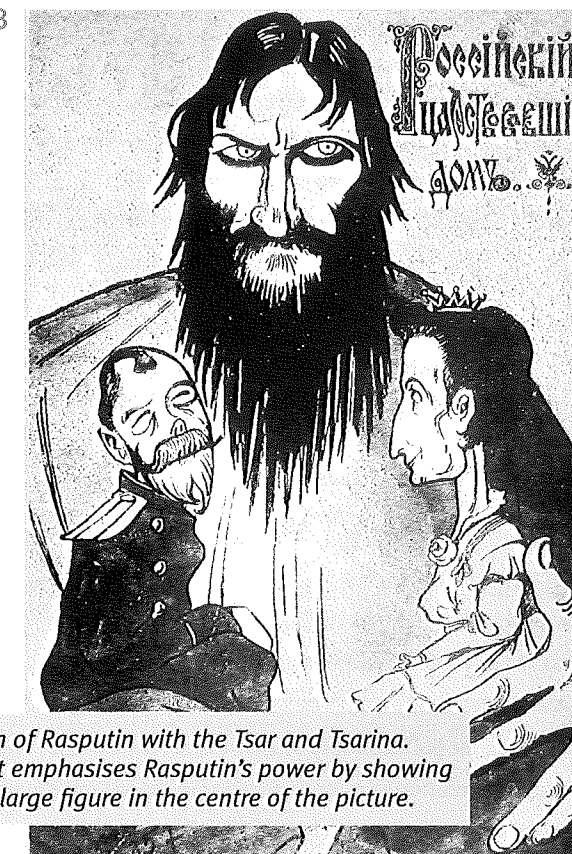
### FACTOR 3 RASPUTIN

The one person the Tsarina was willing to listen to was a mysterious holy man named Rasputin. His influence over her came from his seemingly miraculous ability to heal her sick son, but his character and the many scandals that surrounded him made the Tsarina even more unpopular. Wild rumours circulated that they were both German agents. Some people were even willing to believe that Rasputin had a satanic hold over the entire royal family, and was leading the country to its doom. In December 1916, Rasputin was murdered by a group of jealous noblemen but, by then, it was too late to restore the reputation of the royal family.

### Activity

- 1 Look at the the Tsar and Tsarina in Source B. What does it tell us about attitudes towards them?
- 2 Look at Source C. What does it tell us about the popularity of the war in 1914?
- 3 Look at all of the information in this unit. Explain why the workers in towns, the peasants and the middle class all became disillusioned with the Tsar.

### SOURCE B



A cartoon of Rasputin with the Tsar and Tsarina. The artist emphasises Rasputin's power by showing him as a large figure in the centre of the picture.

### FACTOR 4 THE CRISIS IN THE CITIES

Throughout much of the war, Russian cities suffered from a shortage of food. This was due to a combination of bad harvests, poor transport arrangements and the loss of large areas of rich farmland to the Germans. The shortage meant that food prices went up by around 700 per cent during three years of war, and although workers' wages increased by 200 per cent during the same period, they did not keep pace with inflation. By the beginning of 1917, urban workers were faced with starvation.

### SOURCE C

A secret Petrograd Police Report, dated October 1916, described the effect of the war on the population:

Military defeats brought the masses to a clearer understanding of war – unfair distribution of foodstuffs, an immense and rapid increase in the cost of living, an inadequacy in sources of supply. Everywhere there are exceptional feelings of hostility and opposition to the government because of the unbearable burden of the war and the impossible conditions of everyday life.

# The March 1917 Revolution

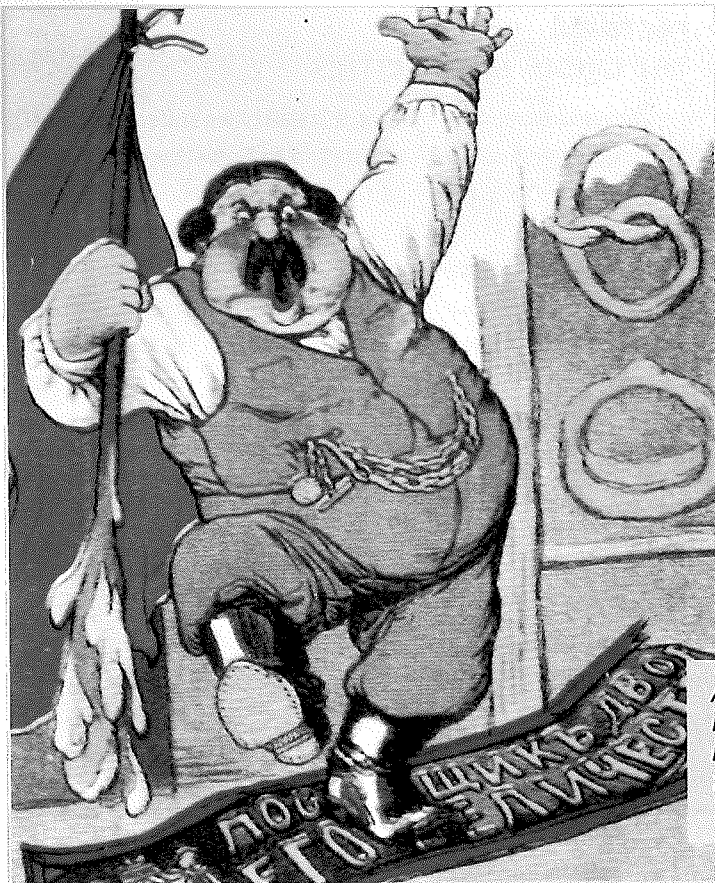
The enormous loss of confidence and support that the Tsar suffered as a result of the First World War made his government very unstable. With so little support it is hardly surprising that he was overthrown. Yet he had managed to survive such crises in the past. Why was 1917 to be so different?

## Why was the March 1917 Revolution successful?

### How was the Tsar overthrown?

In March 1917, the food shortages led to widespread looting in Petrograd. The looters were joined by thousands of striking workers in a series of violent protests. The local army garrison was called out and although some soldiers obeyed orders and fired on the rioters, many others mutinied and joined the protesting crowds. Most of the police simply stood by and refused to do anything. No major revolutionaries were involved in the March Revolution. Most of them were either in prison or in exile.

### SOURCE A



*A middle-class baker enthusiastically joins the revolution. He is trampling on his shop sign which reads, 'By Appointment to the Tsar'.*

**> How does the cartoonist make us question the man's sincerity?**

### SOURCE B

*A Bolshevik eyewitness to the soldiers' mutiny of March 1917 later stated:*

The tips of the bayonets were touching the breasts of the first row of demonstrators. Behind could be heard the singing of revolutionary songs, in front there was confusion. Women, with tears in their eyes, were crying out to the soldiers, 'Comrades, take away your bayonets, join us!' The soldiers moved. They threw swift glances at their own comrades. The next moment one bayonet is slowly raised; there is thunderous applause. The triumphant crowd greeted their brothers clothed in the grey cloaks of the soldiery. The soldiers mixed freely with the demonstrators.

In defiance of the Tsar's orders, a group of middle-class *duma* members met and called themselves the Provisional (temporary) Government. They intended to rule the country until proper elections could be held for a new Russian parliament. At the same time, representatives of the workers and soldiers met and re-formed the Petrograd Soviet, which had been suppressed after the 1905 Revolution. The Tsar finally realised that he had no supporters (he was even deserted by his personal bodyguard) and, in March 1917, was forced to abdicate, after failing to persuade his brother Michael to take the throne. Russia became a republic with no legal government and two rival political institutions.

# The March 1917 Revolution

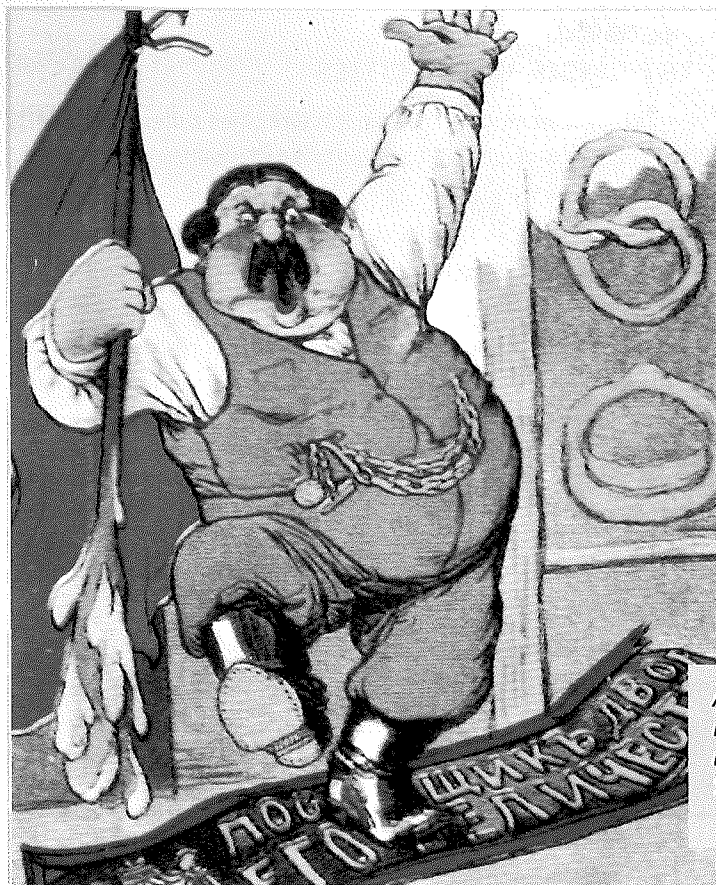
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### The March Revolution: planned or spontaneous?

Historians have often questioned whether the March Revolution was a planned conspiracy or whether it happened in an unplanned, spontaneous way. Most have concluded that the revolution was not planned. The Tsarist government seems to have collapsed because of its own weakness and the problems caused by the war. The Bolsheviks were not very active in the revolution. At the time, the Bolsheviks only had 25,000 members and their leader, Lenin, was far away in exile. He was completely taken by surprise by the news from Petrograd.

### SOURCE C

Speaking in January 1917, from Zurich where he was living in exile, Lenin said that he did not expect to see a revolution in his lifetime:

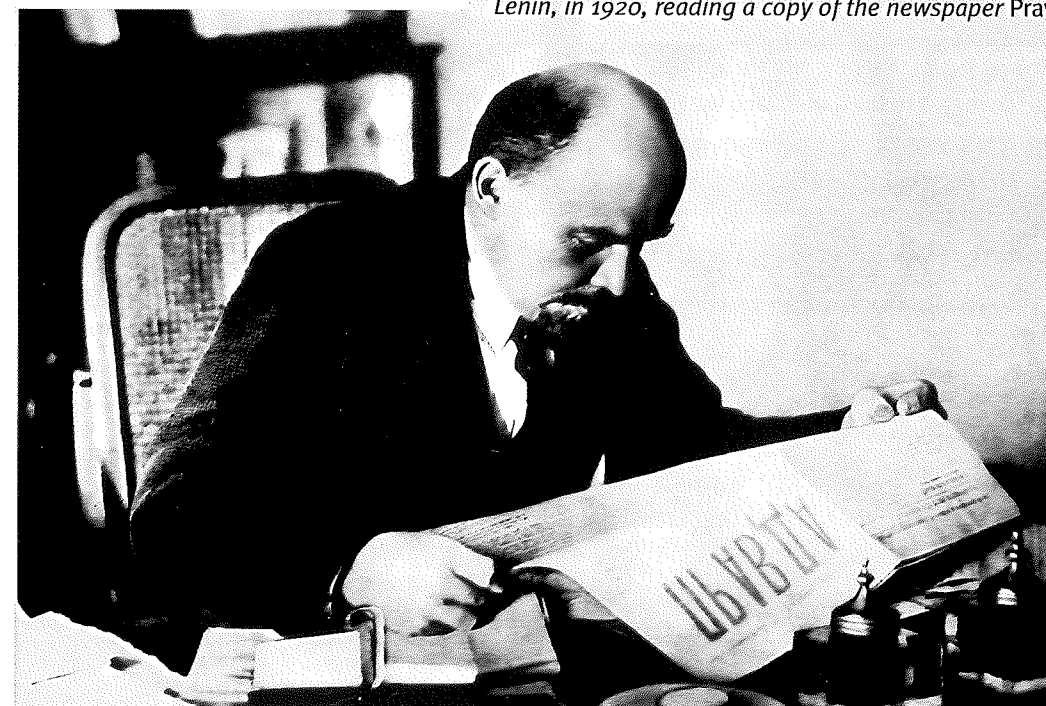
We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of the coming revolution.

### SOURCE D

A Tsarist minister, Kokovtsov, later claimed that everyone was surprised by the revolution:

When other people say that they foresaw the revolution they are telling a complete lie. Everybody expected some political reform that would paralyse the influence of the Tsarina and set up a new administration.

### SOURCE E



Lenin, in 1920, reading a copy of the newspaper Pravda.

### LENIN 1870–1924

In 1897, Lenin was exiled to Siberia for three years because of his revolutionary activities against the Tsar's government. From 1900, he lived mostly in Western Europe. After the Social Democratic Party split into two factions in 1903, he became the leader of the Bolsheviks. He wrote many political books while in exile. After the fall of the Tsar, he returned to Russia from Switzerland, arriving in Petrograd in April 1917, where he was soon joined by Trotsky.

## Activity

- 1 Look at Source B. What does it tell us about the attitude of the soldiers? Explain why this was significant.
- 2 Using all the information in this unit, explain how important a role the Bolsheviks played in the March 1917 Revolution.

# Events leading to the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917

## THE TSAR'S LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

- > Peasant poverty and land shortages led to resentment against the landowners and also to the rise of the Social Revolutionaries.
- > Russia needed to industrialise quickly. She needed to provide a means of defence against modern armies like that of Germany and to provide employment for landless peasants in the new factories.
- > The pace of industrial growth became so rapid that conditions for the factory workers soon became miserable.
- > The growth of towns meant that new political groups wanting political change, like the Kadets and the Social Democrats, appeared.

## THE CAUSES OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

- > Russia suffered a series of humiliating military and naval defeats in the 1904–5 war against Japan.
- > There were severe shortages of essential supplies in the towns because the war disrupted the normal working of the transport system.
- > The events of 'Bloody Sunday' caused deep resentment amongst the population.

## HOW DID THE TSAR SURVIVE THE 1905 REVOLUTION?

- > The Tsar issued the October Manifesto setting up a duma to stop middle-class opposition.
- > He ended the war with Japan so that conditions became easier for workers and their protests were reduced.
- > He used troops returning from the war, and Tsarist gangs, the Black Hundreds, to put down any opposition.
- > In 1906, he passed two laws that reduced the power of the duma.

## The fall of the Tsar in March 1917

The First World War played a crucial part in the fall of the Tsar. Russia's shattering defeats, and the enormous loss of life among her soldiers, were blamed on the Tsar, who had made himself Commander-in-Chief in 1915. The Tsar lost the confidence and the support of the army. The middle classes were disgusted by the defeats and by the incompetence of the Tsarina. The behaviour and influence of Rasputin made things worse. The workers were tired of the shortages and angry at the enormous price rises that threatened them with starvation.

With few supporters left, the Tsar was easily overthrown. In March 1917, the bread rioters in Petrograd were joined by strikers. Many soldiers joined the rioters while the police refused to intervene. The Tsar was forced to abdicate when he realised that he no longer had any support.

Two new 'governments' were now set up:

- > the Provisional Government;
- > the Petrograd Soviet.